

American Center for the Performing Arts

Design Narrative



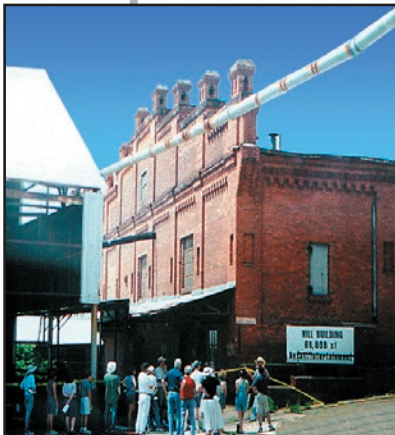
DURHAM - THE FLOWER OF THE CAROLINAS

Originally settled by the Scottish, Irish & British on land granted by King Charles I (namesake of North and South Carolina), Durham, NC has been a jewel city of the south since its inception.

The end of the Civil War, especially, sparked the take-off of Durham's economy and culture. It was then that Washington Duke began building the American Tobacco Company which would soon become the largest tobacco products manufacturer in the world with its highly identifiable brand, "Bull Durham". Indeed, the brand was so popular that the city itself came to be known as "The Bull City".

Today, the Durham area consists of nearly a 1/4 million residents and continues to flourish as a major international center for medicine, education, research and technology. With a location that places it next to major universities, the Research Triangle Park, and Raleigh-Durham International Airport, the Bull City is at the forefront of the New South.

Durham's pivotal status is certain to become more vital to the South, the nation and the world as we enter the twenty-first century.





DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT - ACTIVE INVESTMENT

As the tobacco industry wanes, downtown Durham, which was once almost exclusively dominated by these warehouses, is becoming more diversified. In addition to research, medical, educational and technology industries, downtown is the center for arts and culture and “creative class” type companies such as marketing and PR firms, architects, and software companies. In fact, the most recent master planning of the city calls for numerous adaptive reuse projects that take advantage of hundreds of thousands of square feet for everything from retail and residential to class A office spaces while preserving the historic context of downtown.

Major projects recently completed or in development include:

- American Tobacco Historic District
- Blue Devil Ventures' West Village
- City Place
- Teer Mark Building
- Peabody Place
- Diamond View I
- Diamond View II
- Durham Central Park
- Numerous projects in the City Center District initiated by the Self Help Credit Union & Greenfire Development.

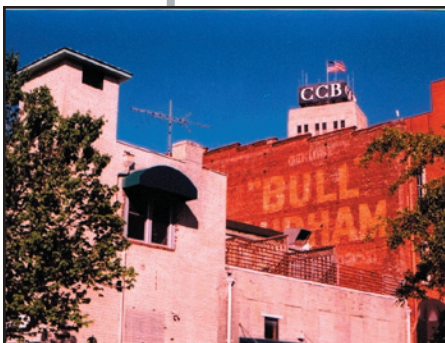


Through the organization of a concerned community, Downtown Durham, Inc. was formed in 1993 to help foster this new growth while being sure to maintain the texture and comfortable character of a southern city's downtown.

The unique active involvement from both public and private sectors in revitalizing Durham's downtown is a solid indicator of the city's passionate spirit and shows why it was ranked as one of the “Best Places to Live” by Money Magazine.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK - A CLEAN BILL OF HEALTH

With a rich history and progressive future that combine high technology, medicine and education, Durham boasts vibrant economic performance. Driven now in large part by a \$1.5 billion a year medical industry, the unemployment rate is less than 4% and growth continues to happen at astounding rates.



Downtown private investment has grown from \$124 million in 1994 to \$269 million in 2005, with projects under development and planned totalling an additional \$300 million. Occupancy of office space has risen from below 70% to current rates of about 82%, and has ranged from 80%-90% over the past three years. At the same time residential development has quadrupled, reinforcing the idea of a community for working, living and leisure. In 1994 there were less than 100 residential units in downtown, a number which has grown to 470 units in 2005, with an additional 500 + units planned in such projects as West Village Phase 2 and American Tobacco.

Small businesses and large corporations alike thrive in Durham as it was rated the No. 1 city in the country for small business by Entrepreneur magazine and the No. 1 area overall in economic growth in the past 25 years.



PERFORMING ARTS CENTERS

In recent years, there has been a boom in the construction of Performing Arts venues in cities across America. By hosting Broadway style shows, concerts, dance competitions, and corporate forums side by side, these facilities appeal to a wide range of patrons. They profit from an increase in the number of events the local populations could usually sustain, and increase the number of patrons they can encourage to return.

Durham is an ideal location.

-- Durham's local population and its more than 5.5 million visitors annually are active in their pursuit of cultural, leisure-time activities (as evident in the 15 arts and performance centers, and 40 different nightclubs) and will seek out opportunities to attend events.

-- A number of events currently bypass Durham due to the lack of a suitable venue.

-- Durham offers an optimum economic base for investment.

-- Durham is only 55 minutes from Downtown Greensboro, and 55 minutes from far past the eastern side of Raleigh. 20 minutes to RDU Airport. 25 minutes to UNC-Chapel Hill. 15 minutes to Research Triangle Park. 5 minutes to Duke University.



DESIGN CONTEXT

Responding to a context as historically and culturally rich as downtown Durham requires an understanding of the components of its past.

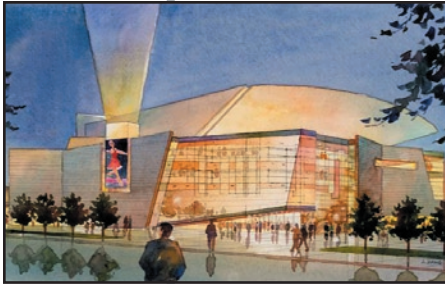
The tobacco industry was the driving force behind Durham's economy for about a century. As a result, much of downtown Durham is populated with massive tobacco warehouses and processing plants that were once home to large crowds, boisterous auctions, and spontaneous flea markets.

At the same time, a rather unusual area of downtown began to flourish on its own. The area came to be known as the Hayti community of Durham and was unique because of its predominantly black ownership. In a time when it was commonplace for blacks to live well below the poverty line, Hayti Durham with its movie theaters, hotels, donut shops and even insurance companies became a place where Booker T. Washington noted "they could stop being colored and simply be people". Other famous visitors included Louis Armstrong and Cab Calloway during Hayti's numerous jazz festivals.

DESIGN INTENT

The urban revitalization efforts now underway in Durham to reclaim the lively nature of its past with new industry are indicative of an emerging spirit of our time architecturally. *Looking ahead while embracing the past* is a recipe that pays homage to images of years gone-by while allowing room for contemporary expression of material, aesthetic, and functional differences.





A THEATER FOR DURHAM

The Durham Theater will have full production facilities and catering amenities to ensure its position as a premier venue for entertainment in the region. It will hold approximately 2,800 seats with additional boxes possible.

The Center, though designed primarily for the American Dance Festival and Broadway-type live theater, will have the capability to host concerts of varying capacities, dance and music festivals and special corporate events for the business community. Full food and beverage capabilities will include special event catering for receptions in the main lobby space, and possibly for the side boxes as well.

A WELCOMING DESTINATION

Landscaping around the Theater will create a naturally shaded pedestrian environment adjacent to Mangum Street, as well as a lush courtyard-garden space between the Theater and the proposed American Tobacco and Capitol Broadcasting developments. This open space will provide a venue for pre- and post-performance functions, and will be a pleasant contrast to the density of the American Tobacco Historic District. Once inside the main lobby areas, patrons will enjoy panoramic views of, depending on the final site selected, the downtown Durham skyline or dramatic views of the Durham Bulls Athletic Park and landscape beyond.

Box Office

Full box services, with the ability to function independently on non-event days are planned for the lower pedestrian entry area. Sited to take advantage of the activity along Mangum Street as well as the planned retail mall, the box office lives as an active reminder to buy tickets for forthcoming events.

SITE, ACCESS, AND PARKING

The proposed site in the American Tobacco Historic District is identified as the best possible location for this venture. Along with the Durham Bulls Athletic Park and the redeveloped warehouse structures, this area is becoming an important entertainment destination for the City of Durham and the entire region. It is an optimal location, close to freeway access and wrapped by streets on four sides for easy parking and traffic flow.



PERFORMANCE HALL FACILITIES

With a full fly tower, a planned 120' x 60' stage and extensive service, electrical and backstage production facilities, the theater will have the capability to host the most technologically sophisticated Broadway shows. A hydraulic lift for the orchestra will create a pit when it is required for live music, or rise up to be level with the theater floor to allow several more rows of prime seating.

The planned configuration, with 2,800 seats arranged in a two-balcony scheme, will provide an intimate setting for shows, dance and concerts. Not only does this configuration guarantee that our patrons enjoy a good seat, it ensures that the venue appeals to the very people who make the event happen - the performers.

State of the art sound and lighting equipment is included in the budget, and will contribute greatly to the audience's enjoyment of all the performances. Acoustically, though not designed for a symphony, we will make accommodations for the addition of an orchestra shell in the future. Additionally, we plan to cover sections of the walls with movable curtains that can be pulled aside to expose "hard" surfaces that are preferred for live music.

Knowing that the facility caters to the specific production needs of live theater, that it can offer the right environment and amenities to provide the audience with a full appreciation of the event, means that the performers and production crew will want to visit, and having experienced this venue, they will want to return.

SUPPORT FACILITIES

Designed to accommodate large casts and crew, the building will have adequate dressing rooms and lounges, wardrobe space, visiting production offices and scene dock facilities. An office suite for theater management will be included, as well as the various offices required by security, housekeeping, etc.

Because of the way in which touring shows travel, a generous loading dock area will be required, as well as access from a primary thoroughfare. Screening this loading area will be a high priority for the design team.

PUBLIC SPACES

A generous lobby space will be provided, both for the orchestra level as well as the balcony levels. With large glass walls giving panoramic views, these flexible spaces will serve as one of the key civic gathering spots for the city of Durham. Exterior plazas, and possibly balconies, will be included to bring the vibrant activity of the Center out of the building on mild days and evenings, energizing this new district.

ARCHITECTURAL FINISHES

The main hall and lobby will be the primary places on the interior where the highest quality finishes will be put. For the lobby, this means stone floors, wood panelling in selected areas, high-end lighting and a variety of acoustical control surfaces. A custom glass curtain wall will give views of the exterior plazas and Durham skyline. Local artists will be encouraged to propose, and possibly execute, economical installations in the various public spaces.

The performance hall will have simple wall and ceiling finishes with exposed catwalks and rigging painted out black, with acoustical curtains on much of the wall surfaces. The goal will be to outfit the hall with the best fabric and wood seats possible within this budget, and finish the balcony and box fronts, and other accent surfaces, in wood or metal.

The support spaces (backstage areas and management offices) will be very economical and simple, allowing for the spending of more money on the public parts of the project. These areas will be primarily gypsum wall board with lay-in ceilings and vinyl composition tile on the floors.

The exterior envelope of the building will be a combination of materials that will act to visually break down the mass of such a large building to a more pedestrian-friendly scale. Budgeted at present are metal wall panels, stone accents, brick and precast wall assemblies. Canopies along the street and at the entry points will further add to the refinement of scale.